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DE RUEHJS #0068 1551016

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R 031016Z JUN 08

FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0226

RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0212

INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0120

RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 0003

RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 0001

RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 0003

RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0118

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0001

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0011

RUEHJS/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 0231

UNCLAS SURABAYA 000068

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, G/TIP, DRL/ILCSR  
BANGKOK FOR INL REFUGEE OFFICE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [SMIG](#) [PREL](#) [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: EASTERN INDONESIA: AFGHANS BOUND FOR AUSTRALIA DETAINED IN  
WEST TIMOR

REF: Jakarta 451 (Surabaya 002)

This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect  
accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Local police arrested seven Afghan nationals near Kupang, West Timor, for immigration violations. According to the police, the Afghans claimed they felt threatened in Afghanistan and intended to enter Australia via boat from Roti Island. All seven reportedly entered on valid Indonesian tourist visas and valid Afghan passports. Police in Kupang arrest foreigners enroute to Australia every couple of weeks. As a result, local officials have developed "good cooperation" with the Australian Police Force (AFP) and International Organization for Migration (IOM). According to AFP, these illegal immigrants often work with Malaysian smugglers, who demand 50 percent payment upfront. AFP is not aware of any recent successful crossings from West Timor, as foreigners standout among the local population and are easily detained. End Summary.

Jakarta-Bali-Kupang-Australia

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¶2. (SBU) Local press articles reported June 3 that Kupang police had arrested seven Afghan nationals in Tablolong, a district located 30 kms west of Kupang city, for immigration violations. Kupang police sources told ConGen Surabaya that the seven men, aged 20-30, entered Indonesia on valid 30-day Indonesian tourist visas and valid Afghan passports. (Note: It is unclear where the visas were issued. Afghan nationals are not illegible to purchase visas on arrival in Indonesia.) The seven Afghans reportedly traveled to West Timor from Jakarta via Bali. They told the police that they felt threatened in Afghanistan and planned to travel to Australia via a rented boat from Roti Island. The Kupang police told us that they had already coordinated with the Immigration Office and Australian Police to deport the seven back to Afghanistan.

¶3. (SBU) The Nusa Tenggara Timor (NTT) provincial police told ConGen Surabaya that such arrests are commonplace. Every couple of weeks, the Kupang police arrest foreigners, especially from Afghanistan, who are trying to reach Australia by transiting Indonesia. IOM officials in Surabaya told us that IOM regularly assists migrants arrested in Indonesia following a request from Indonesian immigration. IOM said that the numbers of would-be

migrants had decreased since 2001/2002, when groups numbering in the hundreds tried to transit Indonesia, due to improved enforcement and coordination between agencies. Today, these illegal immigrants travel in small groups or as individuals in an effort to avoid detection.

Australian-Indonesian Cooperation

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¶4. (SBU) The AFP representative in Australia's Consulate in Bali confirmed that this case is typical. Illegal immigrants are generally smuggled by Malaysian networks, who demand half the money upfront. The remaining fee is apparently due upon safe arrival in Australia. While smuggling attempts along this route are not uncommon, success is rare to unknown. Foreigners stick out among the local population from the moment they arrive, and detention is almost certain. The AFP representative surmised prospective immigrants were giving their money to smuggling networks with little real hope of getting into Australia.

¶5. (SBU) AFP expects an increase in attempts now that the cyclone season has ended and the seas between Indonesia and Australia are approaching their post-cyclone season calm. While these seven Afghans reportedly transited Bali, the AFP has no information on Afghans who have stopped long-term in Bali or requested asylum at the Australian Consulate there. For reasons that are unclear, these immigrants appear intent on reaching Australia via boat. The Bali-based AFP representative added that AFP cooperation with the police in Kupang was excellent, and AFP traveled to West Timor regularly providing training and other assistance (reftel).

MCCLELLAND